

# How the Christian Allies Drove the Turks from the Garden of Eden



**The Rev. Robert Hardy, Chaplain of the British Expeditionary Force, Describes with Heartfelt Emotions His Feelings as the English Regiments Entrenched Themselves on the Very Spot Where God Punished Adam and Eve.**

By the Rev. Robert Hardy, Chaplain of the British Expeditionary Forces in Mesopotamia.

**A**t last the British army is encamped in the Garden of Eden, in the very spot where the Lord God originally planted the human race to dwell in happiness and innocence.

We are now in occupation of Kurnah, which is at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. I have read over my Bible on this sacred site with deep emotion, and I am convinced that this is clearly the place referred to in Holy Writ as part of the Garden of Eden. In the Book of Genesis, chapter 2, verse 10, we read, "And a river went out of Eden to water the Garden."

Genesis also tells us that "the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden." The garden was evidently the fertile land where the mighty rivers unite in one great stream eastward of Kurnah. When the Bible speaks of the river that "went out of Eden" it refers to the sources of the river that watered the garden and not, as we should think, to its course toward the sea. The four rivers of Eden mentioned in Genesis have all been clearly identified with portions of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, although Genesis only uses the present name of one, the Euphrates.

It is a solemn thought that I am standing on the very spot where the Lord God, our Creator, communed with Adam and Eve; where our heavenly Father tenderly watched among the trees in the Garden the effect of his first great moral lesson to his two earthly children, and was compelled to administer the dreadful punishment from which we all have suffered ever since.

During our long and perilous journey hither we passed suddenly from a gloomy swamp into a rich, undulating, healthy region. Here I imagined that I stood on the very spot where the angel with the flaming sword sternly forbade the fallen Adam and Eve to return to the lovely sacred garden.

Then, too, I believe that I have walked over the very spot where Cain killed his brother Abel, committing the first murder and thus leading directly to the present conflict in which the forces of evil and humanity have been seeking to destroy the enlightened races of the earth.

When once Turkey had declared war on the Allies it became a matter of great importance for Britain to seize the head of ancient Mesopotamia flow into the ocean. The Shatt-el-Arab, as the stream is called where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers

unite in one, for the greater part of its course, forms the boundary between Persia and Turkey. Some twenty miles below Basra it is joined by the Kasun, near whose course, about a hundred miles from its mouth, are the Anglo-Persian

Company's oil fields. The effective protection of these is necessarily an object of vital importance. It was also of considerable importance to create a diversion in this quarter which should cause the Turkish generals engaged in defending the Dardanelles to feel uneasiness as to a possible advance up the Euphrates.

The expeditionary force, under Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Barrett, consisted of three Indo-British infantry brigades, a brigade of Indian cavalry, and artillery and auxiliary services in proportion—in all probability some 15,000 to 18,000 men. It included at least three British battalions—the Second Dorsets, the Second Norfolks and the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry.

The advance brigade reached the Shatt-el-Arab and after a brief fight occupied Fao, a few miles up the river. Several attacks were made upon it by a force from Basra, which were easily beaten off.

Shortly afterward the main body of the expeditionary force began to arrive. It has entirely disembarked at Saniyeh, a place above Fao, near the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's depot at Abadan. The weather was wretched. Rain converted the alluvial flats into a wilderness of mud. The men were drenched and caked with the riverine clay; the very rifles were often choked.

We felt at times that we were suffering the curse that fell upon Cain when he was driven forth a wanderer after his murder of Abel, but then I recalled to our men that they were acting as Abel's

avengers and they regained their spirits. Meanwhile the advance guard carried out a reconnaissance up the river and located the enemy in position at Sahilo, about nine miles distant. They numbered about 5,000 men, with twelve guns, under General Subr Bey, the Vali (Governor) of Basra. The reconnaissance carried an advanced position with a loss of sixty killed and wounded, and withdrew unmolested to report.

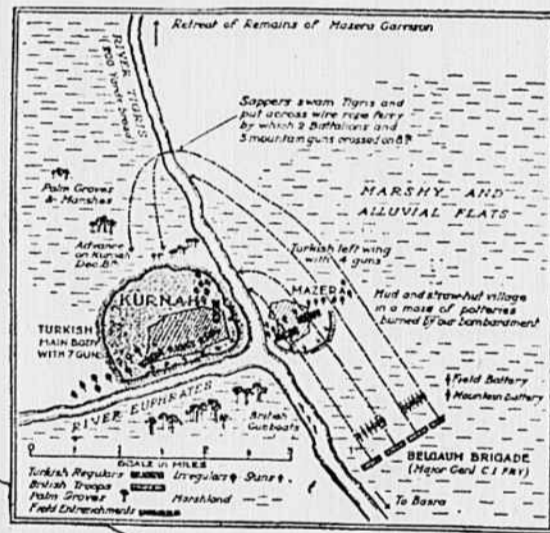
On the 17th General Barrett paraded for the attack the bulk of his force, though neither men nor horses were very fit after the voyage and toilsome landing—the artillery horses especially being nearly helpless. After a trying march through a veritable quagmire, the troops sometimes up to their

waists in slush, the division about 9 a. m. came within range of the Turkish position, and the leading brigade, under Major-General Fry, deployed for attack. The ground was absolutely open, and the Turks had a perfect field of fire. On our side the men had the greatest difficulty in getting forward through the clayey mudbeds, and the worn-out horses could not bring up the field artillery. Nevertheless the Belgum Brigade steadily advanced, and the attack, being presently supported by other troops and assisted by the fire of two gunboats on the river, at last closed upon the Turkish entrenchments and carried them, capturing two guns and one hundred prisoners, besides inflicting a very heavy loss in killed and wounded. The defeat of the enemy was assisted by a mirage, which

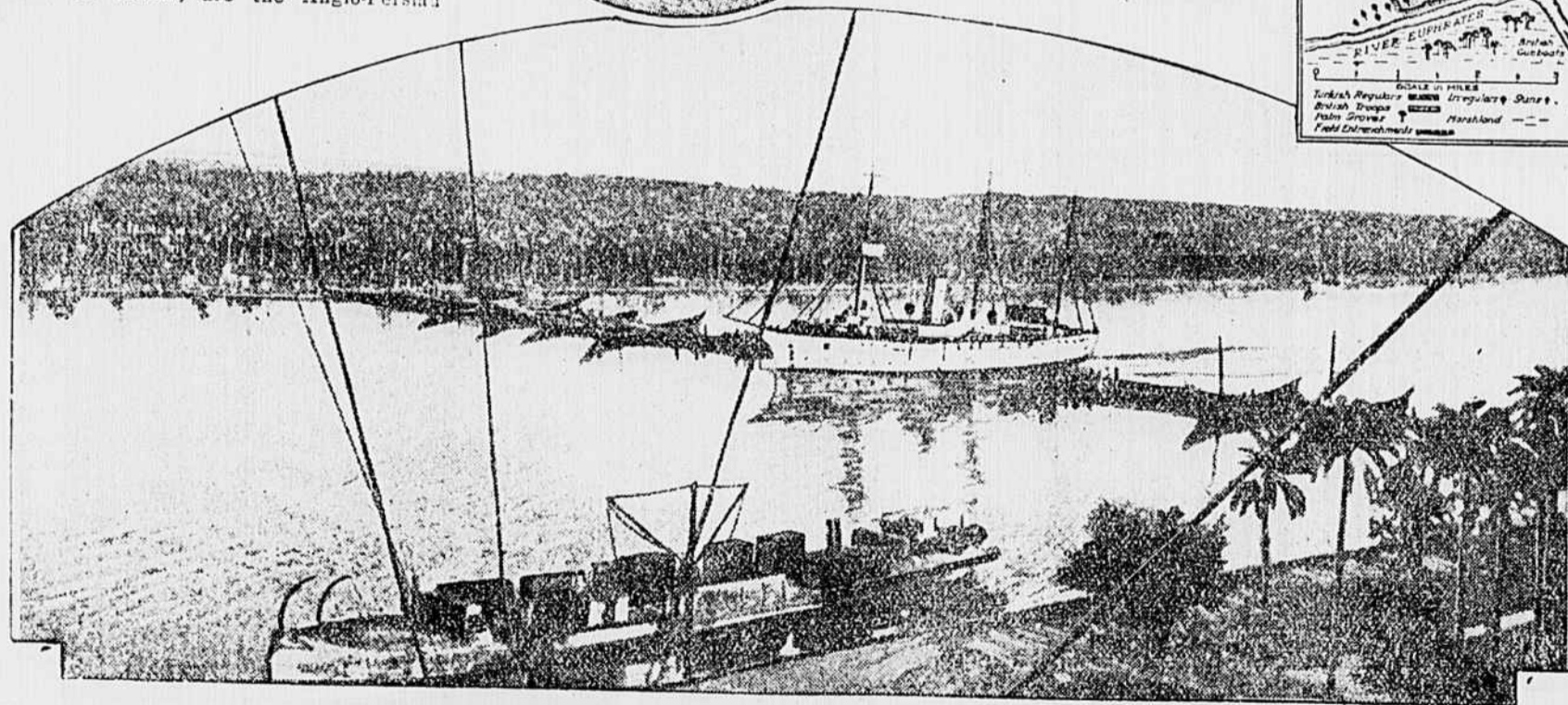


British Troops Roadmaking After the Capture of Kurnah in the Garden of Eden.

British Officers Examining a Krupp Gun Furnished by the Germans and Captured from the Turkish Defenders of Eden.



Map of the British Operations in Mesopotamia Showing Kurnah, the Spot Described in the Book of Genesis as the Entrance to the Garden of Eden and Now Captured by the Christian Allies from the Turks.



British Gunboat Advancing Up the Euphrates River to Rescue the Earliest Scene of Bible History from the Infidel Turks.

**Camp Cooks Preparing Dinner for British Troops Among the Palm Trees of Eden.**—"It was a solemn thought that I stood on the very spot where the Lord God our Creator communed with Adam and Eve, where our Heavenly Father watched among the trees the effect of his first great moral lesson to his two earthly children."

miraculously came to the aid of our gunners.

Subr Bey retreated on Basra. He hastily sunk a German steamer, the Ecbatana, and two other vessels across the fairway in the river below the town, but he had no hope of being able to hold the big, spreading place with his small force, and evacuated it. General Barrett, hearing of the evacuation, sent forward the Norfolk Regiment and the One Hundred and Tenth Marattas on the 21st by steamer, following himself by steamer, following himself by forced marches without opposition.

Subr Bey, having lost Basra, retreated to Kurna, where the Tigris joins the Euphrates. There he entrenched himself. His main body was in Kurna, a large village encircled by palm groves, in the marshy angle formed by the two rivers, with a strong detachment in the straggling village of Mazera on the left bank of the Tigris. South of Mazera was an advanced work with two guns. He was obliged thus to divide his force to guard both banks, since we possessed steamers. His strength was estimated by officers engaged at 7,000 regulars, besides Arabs. He had thirteen guns.

At this point I felt certain that we had at last entered the region made immortal by the Bible and sanctified by the Lord's first dealings with mankind. All about me were the beautiful trees which He planted and there, perhaps, was that fateful tree of which it is written: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat."

A reconnaissance was first made toward Kurna by Lieutenant-Colonel Frazer with the One Hundred and Tenth Marattas, supported by several gunboats and armed launches.

Colonel Frazer's report being received at Basra, the rest of the Belgum brigade was sent up in steamers and barges. A faint Turkish attack upon the camp was beaten off and General Fry advanced upon the Kurna position. The defenders of Mazera made a hard fight, assisted by the thick palm woods; but in the afternoon the village was carried. It had been almost destroyed by the fire of the gunboats, but the latter again suffered severely from the Turkish batteries. Four guns were captured. Some of the defenders escaped across the Tigris, here over 200 yards broad; others had fled along the river bank.

Kurna was now isolated, but its capture presented great difficulties, owing to the width of the rivers and their marshy banks. The place was heavily entrenched and screened by palm groves. All through the day General Fry bombarded it from Mazera, while his infantry were slowly ferried over higher up. This was prepared by some daring sappers, who swam the broad river and fixed a wire rope, by which the boats were worked backward and forward. In the afternoon two battalions and three mountain guns were across and an advance was made against Kurnah from the rear. Subr Bey had lost very heavily at Mazera; his irregulars had mostly run away. So he accepted the inevitable and surrendered with forty-two officers, 1,021 soldiers and seven guns. He had lost about 1,000 killed and wounded. Our own casualties were about 150.

Thus we had captured the Garden of Eden. Under the rule of the horrible Turk it has become a most miserable place. Once mighty cities and flourishing villages have fallen into ruin. The formerly prosperous agricultural population has been almost ground out of existence by Turkish tyranny. But Christian missionaries will restore it to happiness and civilization until perhaps it will fulfil the first promise of our Creator to mankind.